



31st Fighter Wing: The U.S. Air Force's fighter wing south of the Alps

Vol. 51 No. 48

December 23, 2005

Aviano Air Base, Italy

Fly Bys

Holiday meal

A Christmas Day meal is served from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday in the La Dolce Vita Dining Facility. The meal is open to all 31st Fighter Wing members including spouses of deployed members.

31st MDG hours

All 31st Medical Group Services are closed Sunday, Monday and Jan. 2. Extended care services are available from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. today, Saturday, Dec. 31 and Jan. 1 in the Area One family practice clinic. Extended care services for acute needs are available until 6 p.m. during the weeks of Christmas and New Year's. People who have an emergency should visit the closest emergency room or Pordenone's emergency room or call 118. People wanting to ask a nurse a question can call the Health Care Information Line from any Italian phone line toll free at 800-877-660.

Closed

The Housing Management Office and the Furniture Management office is closed Monday.

Aviano Airmen prepare for AOR

By Senior Airman
Colleen Wronek
31st Fighter Wing
Public Affairs

Aviano Airmen gearing up to deploy on the next rotation learned what they can expect in the Area of Responsibility during the Expeditionary Combat Skills training course Dec. 12 through 16.

The 31st Security Forces Squadron graduated 73 Aviano members from the first Expeditionary Combat Skills training course here.

"The training was designed for those who don't attend any combat training before they deploy to Iraq or Afghanistan," said 1st Lt. Thomas McGillicuddy, 31st Security Forces Squadron.

The new Air Force course teaches warfighters the skills needed for deployment to a combat theater.

"We taught them the essential needs to survive in a war zone," said Staff Sgt. Frank Anthony, 31st SFS and course instructor. "All of the instructors have been deployed. We used our experience and taught them what they need and how to help



Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Holzworth

them through." Chief Master Sgt. Dean Yoder, 31st Communications Squadron (left), advances toward opposition forces while Capt. Shaun Meadows, 31st Services Squadron (right), provides cover fire during a field training exercise during the Expeditionary Combat Skills training course. The course is the first home-based deployment training for Aviano Airmen.

them through."

During the course, students received classroom training in the morning and then practiced what they learned in the afternoon. On Thursday they had a realistic field training exercise.

"In the afternoons, we set up scenarios such as learning how to man an entry control point or dealing with some-

one who doesn't have proper identification so the students could practice," said Staff Sgt. Shawn Andrews, 31st SFS training course instructor. "We also taught them use of force, convoy training, combat ground skills, working with different services, cultural awareness, how to

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Where's the news? The Vigileer will not be published Dec. 30 and Jan. 6 due to the holidays. It will be printed again Jan. 13.

31st FW Sortie Board

sortie: n, a flight of a combat aircraft on a mission

	Hours	Sorties
31st FW goal	375.8	347
	+141.5	+32

Information current as of Wednesday.



Happy holidays

Aviano's leaders share season's greetings and holidays messages with the community.

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Travel Munich

Bored during the holidays? Want to travel? Check out the sights, sounds and festivals held six hours away in Munich, Germany.

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From the top: A word from those who lead

Air Force leaders send holiday message

The following is a holiday message from Secretary of the Air Force Michael W. Wynne, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. T. Michael Moseley and Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Gerald R. Murray:

"As 2005 draws to a close, we have the opportunity to reflect on the past year and prepare ourselves for 2006. For many of us, this season brings to mind a yearning for peace. Unfortunately, the enemies of peace are challenging those of us who promote liberty, tolerance and respect for human rights. That is why your service is vital to our nation. In this season of gift-giving, it is one of the greatest gifts you could bestow on your countrymen.

"We have seen this gift you have generously given – and not just to America, but to all nations. You brought food, shelter and security to those whose lives were devastated by the tsunami in Asia and the Indian subcontinent. You saved lives and restored services to those who felt the immense destruction of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. You provided the conditions for the people of Afghanistan and Iraq to experience the gift of democracy. You have created the shield that protects America, flying countless sorties over our homeland. And you have given the gift of national security, by committing yourself to excellence in performing your duties in countless other ways that do not always receive public recognition.

"This gift you give would not be possible without sacrifice. Whether active duty, Reserve, Guard, or civilian, you work under conditions that are very demanding. Some of you are separated from your families this holiday season, deployed to hazardous and austere locations. We are incredibly proud of you and your families, whose support makes your sacrifice possible.

"We are also filled with pride in those who have fallen this year while serving in our Air Force. We shall always remember the gift they gave, and keep their families in our hearts.

"But as we have given the gift of service to our country, we have received much in return. Sometimes, it has been a care package or kind note from a stranger. Or it has been the support of the communities that lie outside our gates. It has been the unspoken thanks in the exhausted eyes of someone evacuated from a disaster. But one thing is certain – we have received the gift of unwavering support from the people of this land.

"As the holidays approach, we urge all of you to reflect on the gifts you have given and received this year. We wish you the gifts of peace, health, and happiness in the coming year."

Aviano Airmen of the Week

Name: Senior Airman Sergey Mytsa, circuit actions technician

Unit: 31st Communications Squadron

Hometown: Hickory, N.C.

Family: Wife Tatiana, father, mother and two sisters

Hobbies: Photography, auto mechanics, biking and travel

Why joined: To serve his country, the education benefits and to gain experience in communications technology



Name: Senior Airman Jeffery Hunter, passenger service agent

Unit: 724th Air Mobility Squadron

Hometown: Cocoa, Fl.

Family: Father, mother and sister

Hobbies: Music, reading, sports, travel and surfing

Why joined: To serve his country and to travel

Air Force makes changes to BAH policy

By Staff Sgt. C. Todd Lopez
Air Force Print News

Beginning in January, the Air Force and the other military services will eliminate geographic rate protection for the basic allowance for housing.

Over the last five years, geographic rate protection meant BAH rates around military communities could never drop, even when estimates for median housing costs in an area suggested they should.

Under the current system, new arrivals at an installation would receive the protected BAH rate, even if housing rates in the area had dropped and adequate housing was available for them at a lower cost.

In 2006, BAH rates will fluctuate yearly based on housing cost estimates made from data collected regionally by military housing offices. The budget-conscious move by the Department of Defense is designed to save money at a time when resources are tight.

Under the new system, people who remain in an area will never see their individual BAH rate lower. That policy, called individual rate protection, is designed to ensure Airmen and other military members who have already established homes

aren't faced with a cut in their BAH rate.

Individual rate protection ensures Airmen will always receive ample funding to remain in the homes they have established, and at the same time provides DOD a common-sense way to fund that allowance.

Besides changes to rate protection, there are two additional changes to BAH coming in the 2006. The first is the elimination of the BAH differential for members living off base. The second is a change to in-transit BAH rates for new Airmen.

The BAH differential is a flat rate, based on grade, paid to members who pay court-ordered child support. In 2006, the differential will no longer exist for members residing off base. Instead, they will receive the BAH with-dependents rate, even if they have no dependents in their home.

The BAH differential rate will also be eliminated outside the United States. But there, members receive an overseas housing allowance, or OHA, instead of the Stateside BAH. Like in the United States, with the elimination of the BAH differential, members overseas residing off base will begin receiving the OHA with-dependent rate. But unlike in the United States, overseas members do not always receive

the full OHA. Instead, they receive only that amount they spend on rent. For those members, it will be impossible to extract the extra benefit provided by an OHA with-dependent rate to use toward child support.

Under the new plan for BAH differential, members entitled to the differential will continue to receive it if they live in government quarters.

A final change to military BAH policy involves new military members who are traveling from their initial training location to their first duty station.

When new accessions to the Air Force travel from their initial training location to their first duty station, they are said to be "in transit." Most new Airmen who are single receive the BAH II rate, commonly called "BAH in transit." Like the BAH differential, BAH II is a flat rate, tied only to a member's rank.

Members with questions on BAH payments should visit: <https://secureapp2.hqda.pentagon.mil/perdiem>. Members with questions on the process used to set BAH rates should contact their local housing office. An e-mail account has been set up to take questions: BAH.hotline@pentagon.af.mil.

Thrifty: The thrift shop opens Jan. 10 and is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays and the first Saturday of the month.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Randy Mallard

Reaching out

Airman 1st Class Aaron Rodziwicz, 31st Maintenance Squadron, straps Jimmy Bedford into an F-16 for an incentive flight Dec. 15. As part of a Project Connect initiative, Mr. Bedford, master distiller of Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey, toured Aviano. He also spoke to Aviano's company grade officers at the community center Friday. Sharing his work philosophy, Mr. Bedford said, "Even though I wasn't the smartest, working hard gave me an edge. I never waited to the last minute to begin a project. Being honest, a hard worker and responsible is the way to go." Mr. Bedford also spoke of his company's views on drinking responsibly. "Drink responsibly and pace yourself; at JD we preach that and hope everyone follows that."

Handling media questions

Nobody tells the Air Force story better than its members. To the media, Airmen have the most credibility and the best outlook on the military and their career.

Military members are bona fide spokespersons for the Air Force. What they say is important and can reflect on the entire force. Though media inquiries should be conducted through the base public affairs office, that doesn't always happen. Here are a few tips if you are ever approached by the media without proper representation:

- If you have the opportunity, call the public affairs office. They can be reached through the law enforcement desk quickly and easily.
- You are encouraged

to talk about what you know, but ensure you follow the rules of information security and state your opinions aren't those of the Air Force.

- Always answer honestly but without saying "no comment." If you don't know the answer to a question, or if the answer is classified or would invade someone's privacy, it's OK to say so.

- Remember, everything you say is "on the record."

Every media encounter is a valuable opportunity that must be taken advantage of to convey who we are, what we do and the resources we need to do the job our nation expects of us.

For more information, call the public affairs office at Ext. 7555.

AMS access procedures changes

Randolph Air Force Base, Texas – In a recent change to improve security and standardize access controls, access to the Assignment Management System is now controlled by the Air Force Personnel Center's Secure Web site.

Airmen can access the AFPC Secure site through the public Web site at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/ by establishing a user identification and password or by using the common access card.

Once Airmen enter the secure Web site, it will provide them automatic access to the AMS application and others such as the virtual Military Personnel Flight.

Commanders must delegate higher-level AMS access roles for their staff. The person-

nel center's AMS help desk will no longer assign these roles to any Airman, except commanders.

Beginning Feb. 15, the common access card will be required for higher-level access in the AMS. Currently, during the trial period, designated Airmen may gain higher-level access with their user identifications and passwords. However, they should verify their access card works during this time.

For more information on enabling CAC readers Airmen should contact unit client support administrators.

For questions about AFPC Secure, call DSN 665-5004, commercial (210) 565-5004 or (800) 616-3775.

(Courtesy of AFPC News Service)

Right start: There is no Right Start Tuesday through Dec. 30. Call Ext. 5683 for information.

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react in certain situations and other basic knowledge that can be useful downrange."

The training was for those who wouldn't normally find themselves in a combat situation.

"Just because you are in communications or work in services doesn't mean you won't find yourself in a combat situation," Sergeant Andrews said. "Everyone has the potential to go off-base and encounter something. You could be a finance Airman and have to leave the base on a convoy to do bank runs. If someone isn't trained or prepared it puts everyone on the convoy at risk."

Staff Sgt. Gary Marone, 31st Security Forces Squadron, said the instruction was tailored to the Airman's manual and it was the primary reference in all classes.

"The students realized that some of the dangerous stuff such as conducting unexploded ordnance sweeps can also happen on base," he said. "We also made sure everyone remembered how to load and clean their weapon. Some of them haven't picked up their weapon



Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Holzworth

Aviano Airmen return fire as they are attacked by opposition forces during the Expeditionary Combat Skills training course.

since basic training."

On Thursday, the students went through a realistic field training exercise in Maniago.

"When we were at the FTX, the Italians were doing the same training except on the other side of the range. It was almost life-like – with helicopters, explosions and smoke," Sergeant Anthony said. "I was impressed to see how people in non-combat roles enjoyed charging at the enemy."

Senior Airman Chad Hargarten, 31st Logistics Readiness Squadron, said this is also his first deployment and he feels the

training has put him in the right mindset to go downrange with confidence.

"My favorite part was the FTX because we got a chance to wear the gear we would wear in a hostile environment and play war games," the vehicle mechanic said.

"The instructors did an outstanding job with the course. They set the pace for us and did a great job motivating everyone. They gave us a lot of good advice and told us their experiences in the desert. They were professional and did an outstanding job, and I just want to say 'thank you.'"

Holiday Eating Strategies

By the Aviano Women, Infants, Children Overseas office

Most people enjoy the traditional holiday abundance of foods, but not very many enjoy the extra pounds gained that take months to lose. Thankfully, there are a few painless ways to ensure the joys of holiday feasting don't ruin figures.

* **Veggies first.** When the meal is served, eat the salad or vegetables first. You'll be less inclined to unhealthy foods.

* **Practice portion control.** People don't have to deny themselves their favorite holiday treats, just limit their serving size. They can satisfy cravings without going overboard.

* **Take your time.** Eat until satisfied, not stuffed. If people eat slowly and chew food well, the brain will better register that you are no longer hungry. Stop eating before you start to feel uncomfortably full.

* **Veggies second.** After tasting everything, allow seconds of healthy foods only, such as vegetables, fruits and lean meats.

* **Less sugar.** Make desserts with sugar-free Jell-O and pudding mixes, or substitute an artificial sweetener for the sugar in baking recipes.

* **Burn calories.** After a meal, go for a brisk walk. Make it a family outing.

* **Give away leftovers.** Leftovers are tempting, so share the wealth with friends or neighbors.

Happy holidays Aviano, and Buon Appetito! For more nutrition tips, call the WIC Overseas office at Ext. 7473.

TSP: 2006

AFPC offers catch-up contribution enrollment

The Air Force Personnel Center's Civilian Benefits and Entitlements Service Team automated systems will be available for 2006 Thrift Savings Plan catch-up contribution enrollment. Military members may submit their 2006 catch-up contribution enrollments in early January. TSP catch-up contributions are additional tax-deferred contributions, separate from regular TSP contributions.

To be eligible for catch-up contributions, civilian and military employees must be age 50 or older in the year in which the first deduction from pay occurs, be in a pay status, and must be able to certify that they will make (or have made) the maximum regular TSP employee contributions of \$15,000 by the end of 2006.

They must contribute the full \$15,000 since regular employee contributions are no longer limited to a set percentage each pay period. However, if the employee is contributing, or has contributed, to both a civilian and uniformed services TSP account or another eligible employer plan and the combined contributions reach the \$15,000 elective deferral limit, the employee would be eligible to make catch-up contributions.

They also must not be in the six-month non-contribution period following a financial hardship in-service withdrawal.

Catch-up contributions have their own IRS annual limit separate from the annual limit for regular TSP contributions. The maximum catch-up contribution for 2006 is \$5,000; while the IRS annual elective deferral limit for regular TSP contributions is \$15,000.

Catch-up contributions automatically stop with the last pay date in the calendar year or upon reaching the maximum catch-up dollar limit for the year, whichever comes first. Because the IRS annual elective deferral limit for catch-up contributions changes each year, participants must submit a new election each year.

Civilian employee enrollments submitted after Saturday will be effective at the beginning of the next pay period.

Eligible Air Force-serviced civilian employees may enroll for catch-up contributions via the Employee Benefits Information System Web application or the BEST phone system. EBIS is available on the web at <https://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afpcsecure/default.asp> or through the AF Portal at <http://www.my.af.mil>.

Additional information on the TSP Catch-Up contribution program is available on the BEST Web site at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/dpc/best/menu.htm under "Thrift Savings Plan," and the TSP Web site at www.tsp.gov.

Military catch-up contributions can be made at the military personnel flight, and finance offices by filling out a Form TSP-U-1-C. (Courtesy of Air Force Personnel Center)



Photo by Capt. Mark Hanson

From one pilot to another

Lt. Col. Charles Moore, 555th Fighter Squadron, shows country music singer Aaron Tippin an F-16 with a combat load at Balad AB, Iraq. Mr. Tippin, a helicopter and fixed-wing airplane pilot, performed for the deployed troops.

Aviano's library - more than just books

By Senior Airman
Sarah Gregory
31st Fighter Wing
Public Affairs

Here people can check e-mail, rent DVDs and escape into a world of history, mystery, romance or science fiction. It's the Aviano Library and they offer more than just traditional book borrowing.

Members can take advantage of free Internet service, movies, catch up on the latest best seller or learn about different cultures.

"We recently received \$30,000 in local funds that we used to purchase new children's and adult books and lots of new DVDs and books on CD," said Lenore Shapiro, 31st Services Squadron library director.

Another service Aviano members may not be aware of is the U.S. Air Forces in Europe online library. Once a user registers on the site, they can search the online catalog for books and borrow materials from any library

in the USAFE command.

"People can use the Web site to check their accounts to see what they have out, how long they have left to return items and they can put books on reserve," said Mrs. Shapiro. "It's easy to register; visit the library and we'll take care of you in two minutes."

In addition to new books and movies, the library also received a mini-renovation.

"We had new carpeting, computer workstations and office furniture installed," Mrs. Shapiro said.

In addition to new furniture, the library staff made their own contribution to the renovation.

"On their own, the staff bought paint from the self-help store and painted the computer room," said Mrs. Shapiro. "We also had a lot of volunteers come in during the renovation. They helped us get rid of a lot of damaged, old and outdated books."

To view the Aviano online catalog, visit <http://www.usafelibraries.org/>.

Upcoming programs:

Jan. 14 - For a Martin Luther King Jr. remembrance, the movie "Citizen Kane" will be shown from 3 to 5 p.m. This movie traces the last few years of King's life through use of photographs, film footage, eyewitness accounts and other sources.

Jan. 25 - A wireless internet workshop is offered from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Bring questions or problems regarding accessing the Internet through wireless technology. For more information on these classes, call Ext. 5893.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Michael Holzworth

Back (left to right): Kay Zobrist, Col. Michael Schaffrinna, Col. Steven Schrader and Lt. Col. Michael Kucej.

Front (left to right): Col. Scott Zobrist, Brig. Gen. Robert Yates, Barb Yates, Command Chief Master Sgt. Pamela Lane, Mike Lane, Col. Kimberly Toney and Karine Kucej.

Happy Holidays from Aviano's senior leaders



Barb and I would like to extend the warmest of holiday greetings to each and every member of the World's Finest 31st Fighter Wing and all of Team Aviano. Our hearts go out especially to our deployed members and their families who remain here over the holidays. Thank you for your service and all the great things you've done for our Air Force and the nation this year. Barb and I are honored to be part of the "World's Finest" team and we look forward to continued success in 2006. Happy Holidays, Buone Feste, Buon Natale and God Bless! — *Brig. Gen. Robert Yates, 31st Fighter Wing Commander*

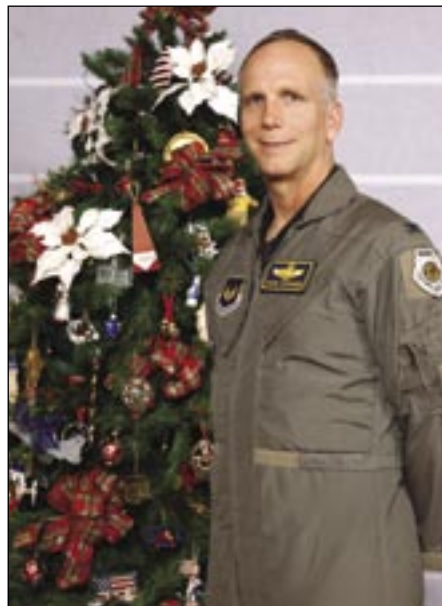
Thank you to the Aviano community for all the wonderful things you have been doing this holiday season. Special thanks to all our Aviano volunteers, especially Holly Thompson for her work with the Christmas Cottage and Karine Kujec for the Cookie Drive. Not only did we meet our goal, but with the help of all our volunteers baking and delivering, we went above and beyond and for that we're very thankful. I would also like to thank the community for their tremendous support for the Spouse It Up events. You have been so generous and giving and the events have been successful thanks to you. Happy Holidays! — *Barb Yates*



To the men and women of the 31st Fighter Wing: Best wishes for a safe, happy, and joyful holiday season. A special wish goes out to both our deployed warriors and their families. Thank you for the sacrifice you are making and we hope that you have a joyful reunion with your loved ones. We hope that 2006 brings each of you peace, happiness, good health, and success. A huge thank you to everyone at Aviano for all you do for our wing, Air Force and country. Be safe and take good care of each other during this special season. Happy Holidays. - Command Chief Master Sgt. Pamela Lane, 31st Fighter Wing command chief, Mike Lane and daughter, Stephanie.



The ancients rejoiced in the cleansing of winter and the renewal of spring. May 2006 renew our resolve for excellence at work and home, but most of all, enhance our respect for one another. — Col. Michael Schaffrinna, 31st Medical Group commander



This is the time of year to enjoy friendship and fellowship with our families and friends. Personally as a Catholic, it is a time to celebrate the birth of our Savior and all that goes with that. It's also time to remember our fellow Airmen downrange and their families. I am thankful for their sacrifice and selfless service. — Col. Steven Schrader, 31st Fighter Wing vice commander



Happy Holidays! I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you all for everything you do and for making our team the world's finest. May the New Year bring you and your family only the very best. — Col. Kimberly Toney, 31st Mission Support Group commander



This holiday season, the Kucej family is grateful beyond words to have PCSed into another awesome Air Force community. Move after move, we keep thinking that there's no way the people at our new assignment will compare with those we just left. But once again, we were proven wrong. Thanks to all who have made us feel welcome and been such great role models to our family. Happy holidays. — Karine and Lt. Col. Michael Kucej, acting 31st Maintenance Group commander



As a kid, I loved to watch all the animated Christmas TV specials every year. I still try to watch the classics. Who could forget the Grinch's dog, Max; Heatmiser and Snowmiser; Burgermeister Meisterburger; the Land of Misfit Toys; Cindy Loo Who; "Bumbles bounce!" and that age-old question, is it "Herbie" or "Hermie"? We hope everyone at Aviano has a great holiday season! — Kay and Col. Scott Zobrist, 31st Operations Group commander

New Year's Eve

The La Bella Vista Club is ringing in 2006 with three party packages. Patrons can choose a gourmet dinner, dinner and dancing or party tickets. Party tickets include champagne, entertainment, breakfast and party favors. For more information, call Ext. 4303.

Vet clinic hours

The Aviano Veterinary Clinic is closed today, Monday, Thursday, Dec. 29, Jan. 1 and 2. It will open with normal operating hours Tuesday and Wednesday. For more information, call Ext. 8485.

Holiday services

Aviano's holiday Protestant services include a family candlelight Christmas Eve service at 7 p.m. Saturday with communion at 9 p.m.; an 8:30 a.m. liturgical service and a 10 a.m. contemporary service Sunday; a 10 a.m. gospel service Sunday in the base theater; and a 10 p.m. watch night service Dec. 31 in the Chapel. Aviano's holi-

day Catholic services include Christmas mass at 5:30 p.m. Saturday; midnight mass and mass at 11:30 a.m. Sunday; mass at 5:30 p.m. Dec. 31; and mass at 11:30 a.m. Jan. 1.

POV inspections

The 31st Logistics Readiness Squadron POV Inspections office offers winter vehicle safety inspections for all U.S. ID card holders through Dec. 30 at the POV inspection station, Bldg. 43 in the Aviano Industrial Area. The inspections office is open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information, call Ext. 4458.

Holiday hours

The following 31st Services Squadron agencies will be closed Saturday through Monday and Jan. 1 and 2: Area One Child Development Center, flightline CDC, La Bella Vista Club, fitness annex, home fuels, Mensa, veterinary clinic and youth center. The Arts and crafts, bowling center, Information Tickets and Travel, library and outdoor

recreation is closed Sunday, Monday and Jan. 1 and 2. The La Dolce Vita dining facility is closed Saturday. Buon Appetito dining facility is closed Sunday. The community center is closed Saturday, Monday and Jan. 1. The golf course is closed Sunday and Jan. 1 and the fitness center and lodging are open throughout the holidays.

Used vehicles

Outdoor recreation is managing the Used Vehicle Sales Lot. The lot is at the upper half of the commissary parking lot at rows K, L and M. The cost for spaces is \$9 per week, \$15 for two weeks and \$25 per month. All vehicles currently for sale parked in the base exchange lot must register with outdoor recreation by Jan. 3. Vehicles not registered and parked in designated spots will be ticketed and towed at the owner's expense. To register a vehicle or for more information, call Ext. 8623 or 8625.

Combat Education

Registration for the University of Maryland University College-Europe term three classes beginning Jan. 16 is from Jan. 2 through Jan. 13. Students may register online or through local representatives. On-site classes run from Jan. 16 through March 11 and online distance education runs from Jan. 23 to May 13.

Deployments

The Air Force is seeking officer and enlisted volunteers for extended deployments throughout 2006. Interested officers can contact their assignment teams and enlisted members can view opportunities and volunteer through the Enlisted Quarterly Assignment Listing Plus. Airmen who volunteer may request a follow-on assignment or elect to remain at their home station. If enough volunteers are not received, the most eligible non-volunteers will be identified. Selected Airmen must obtain retainability to complete the TDY. Airmen without retainability who decline the TDY must separate or retire under current Air Force policy.

For more information including a list of frequently asked questions, visit <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afas/extendedTDYs/extendedtdy.htm> or call DSN 665-4273.

Germany PCS

Employees of Gosselin Moving Company are under investigation for stealing items from household goods or unaccompanied baggage shipments. People who PCSed to or from Germany from 2000 through 2003 and had items missing from their shipment that was handled by the Gosselin Moving Company can visit <http://www.ramstein.af.mil/theft-page.htm>. The website lists recovered items along with photographs. If someone thinks an item belongs to them, send an e-mail to the Ramstein Air Base Claims office including the photo number, name of the item and proof of ownership, if available. Ramstein's claims office also would like to know if a missing item claim was filed either through the government or a private insurance company.

Deployment Club

The Aviano Kindergarten Deployment Club needs volunteers to lead or help children with crafts and activities. The club is from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Aviano Kindergarten in Area One. To volunteer, e-mail kristine.kessler@eu.dod-dea.edu.

Heritage month

The Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday and African American Heritage Month special observance committees meet 3 p.m. Wednesdays in the second floor conference room in Bldg. 103, Area One. People interested can attend the meetings or call Ext. 5242 or Ext. 5219.

Hometown greeting

People who taped a holiday hometown greeting in September and have received feedback from their family are encouraged to e-mail 1st Lt. Jen Ferrau at jennifer.ferrau@aviano.af.mil for an article on the success of the program and personal experiences.

Reel Times

Today, 2 p.m. - "Chicken Little" Rated G

Today, 5 p.m. - "Chicken Little" Rated G

Today, 8 p.m. - "History of Violence" Rated R

Saturday, 7 p.m. - "Wallace and Gromit: The Curse of the Wererabbit" Rated G

Sunday, 7 p.m. - "Domino" Rated R

Tuesday, 7 p.m. - "Chicken Little" Rated G

Wednesday, 7 p.m. - "Domino" Rated R

Thursday, 7 p.m. - "Wallace and Gromit: The Curse of the Wererabbit" Rated G

Dec. 30, 2 p.m. - "In her Shoes" Rated PG-13

Dec. 30, 7 p.m. - "Elizabethtown" Rated PG-13

Dec. 31, 7 p.m. - "Get Rich or Die Tryin" Rated R

Jan. 1, 7 p.m. - "Get Rich or Die Tryin" Rated R

Jan. 4, 7 p.m. - "Elizabethtown" Rated PG-13

Jan. 5, 7 p.m. - "Get Rich or Die Tryin" Rated R

(Titles and times are courtesy of www.aafes.com, and are subject to change.)

Fly Bys

Local area events

Tuesday through Jan. 15 - Christmas market in Verona. The market is open from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 3 to 7:30 p.m. daily and has an atmosphere of older times. For more information, visit <http://www.ilvillaggiodinatale.it>.

Sunday and Monday - Sesto al Reghena. The living nativity in the ancient Benedictine abbey where the birth of Christ is re-enacted.

Dec. 28 - In Tarvisio, the church remembers the slaughter of the innocents by Herod by celebrating Schip Schap. Children armed with wooden sticks run around town singing the Schip Schap riddle.

Jan. 5 - The Rogo del Pane Vin (bonfires) is celebrated in northern Italy when farmers welcome the new year by burning huge piles of wooden sticks.

Call Ext. 5407 for information on these events.

Tourist passports

Having a tourist passport when traveling is the safest way to travel. Information, Tickets and Travel passengers must have a tourist passport to travel to Poland, Croatia, Slovenia, Russia, Romania, Hungary, Czech Republic, Turkey, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel and Kenya. Passports may be obtained at the Aviano Military Personnel Flight.

Munich: A city for all seasons

By Senior Airman Sarah Gregory
31st Fighter Wing
Public Affairs

Perhaps most famous for its annual Oktoberfest celebration, Munich, Germany, actually has much to offer visitors year round. Every season brings a new festival to the city with the winter carnival season, or Fasching, running from January through February.

Although the winter carnival season is short, hundreds of balls take place during the month-long celebration which begins with the crowning of the King and Queen of Fools. The dances, varying from classic evening dress to colorful costume parties, culminate with a giant street party on Shrove Tuesday in mid-February. The party is held in the Viktualienmarkt, the old market in the center of Munich, with live music, people in fancy costumes and the dance of the market women.

Although some dances are invitation-only affairs, don't worry about missing the party - pretty much any bar or restaurant has their own Fasching dance.

Other Fasching events include the Christkindlmarkt markets on the Marienplatz. Look for the giant Christmas tree which dominates over the stalls and stands. Live Christmas music is played on



Courtesy photo

The wealthy city of Munich, Germany is easy to explore with the city's efficient public transportation.

the Town Hall balcony every day beginning at 5:30 p.m.

For those looking to escape the market and party crowds, Munich has several museums and attractions to offer.

One good place to visit, especially those with families, is the Hellabrun Zoo. Animals are grouped by their natural and geographical habitats with minimal cages. A new rain-forest house has been added to the zoo and offers guided night tours. The zoo also has several restaurants and children's play areas and is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily during the winter. Entry fees are 9 euro for adults and 4,50 euro for children under age 14; children under age 4 get in free.

Another interesting place to visit is the Deutsches Museum located on an island in the Isar River, near the city center. To get there, take any of the S-trains and

get off at the Isartor stop.

The museum focuses on science and technology with displays of aircraft, vehicles, machinery and locomotives. Consisting of six floors and 30 different departments, including a children's area with interactive displays, it's easy to spend all day inside. The museum is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and entrance fees are 7,50 euro for adults and 3 euro for youth under age 16.

Visitors can get to Munich by train or if driving, by taking the A4 toward Trieste/Udine to the A23 toward Udine and then the A10 toward Salzburg/Munich.

For those looking to get away over the holiday break, visiting Munich is the perfect way to spend some quality family time. Despite its Oktoberfest reputation, Munich is actually a diverse city with many attractions for all different interests.

Looking to travel? Check out travel advisories, restrictions and other information at usembassy.state.gov before the trip.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Bethann Caporaletti

Located on the River Vltava, Prague's medieval architecture remains untouched by natural disaster or war.

Information, Tickets and Travel

Upcoming tours from the Information, Tickets and Travel office include:

- Saturday: Slovenian Rhapsody (Ljubljana, Postumia caves and Castle)
- Saturday - Monday: Rome for Christmas including Vatican Christmas Mass
- Dec. 31 - Jan. 1: New Year's Eve in Vienna
- Jan. 2: Pisa and Vinci

- Jan. 7: Guided Verona
 - Jan. 7: Guided Salzburg
 - Jan. 13-16: Prague for Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend
- ITT escorts ensure the group arrives and departs from the destination as scheduled and will do everything possible to make the trip safe and comfortable. Escorts also provide general information about the area. Call Ext. 5072 or 5026 for more information.

F-16 maintainer, coach, winner

Aviano wrestler tries for AF team

By **Senior Airman Colleen Wronek**
31st Fighter Wing Public Affairs

An Aviano wrestler competed at the U.S. Forces in Europe wrestling tournament Dec. 9 through 11 and is now trying for the Air Force team.

"I placed fourth in free style and received the gold medal for first in the Greco-Roman style," said Staff Sgt. John Julian, 31st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. "This is the first European Armed Forces tournament I've competed in. This tournament was an open tournament. I competed against all services from all over Europe."

High school wrestling, or folk style, has more rules to ensure wrestler safety, the 26-year-old F-16 avionics craftsman said. "Free-style and Greco-Roman style rules are a bit more liberal when it comes to throws and safety. It's more exciting to watch."

If Sergeant Julian's application for the Air Force team is accepted, he said he'll begin training with the Air Force team in February.

"During that time they will assess me and I either will continue wrestling on the Air Force team, or return to my primary Air Force Specialty Code," he said. "If I do get the oppor-

tunity, I will be very proud and grateful to represent the Air Force around the world."

Although Sergeant Julian, who has been wrestling since he was five years old, works long hours on the flight line, he also is an assistant wrestling coach at Aviano High School.

"Coaching is a very rewarding experience. I also work out with the other coaches at the high school," he said. "I'm not currently training other than coaching and PT, but generally wrestlers have grueling workouts. They tend to be very motivated and train hard."

Sergeant Julian does wrestle with a certain strategy, but he said it has to remain secret.

"Just like any other individual competitor's sport, after all is said and done, your bumps, bruises and hard work attest to how hard you push yourself. It's very gratifying when you win," Sergeant Julian said.

Aviano doesn't have a wrestling team, but Sergeant Julian said he thinks it's a great idea. "I'm sure there are many wrestlers on base who would be interested, he said.

If there are any wrestlers who are interested, they can e-mail him at john.julian@aviano.af.mil.

Skaters: Skaters are required to wear a helmet in the skate park and other safety gear is recommended.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Holzworth

Staying Fit

Master Sgt. Christopher Stephens, 31st Maintenance Squadron, cycles in the Ride for Life spin class. Pedal at the indoor cycling classes 6:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays or jab and kick into shape during the Cardio Kickboxing classes 4:30 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays in the Dragon Fitness Center. For more information, call Ext. 7459.

Fly Bys

Gift certificates

The Area Two Fitness Center offers massage gift certificates for loved ones this holiday season. For more information or an appointment, call 348-364-0684.

Cosmic bowling

The bowling center is offering New Year's Eve cosmic bowling for Project CHEER from 4 to 10 p.m. Dec. 31. For more information, call Ext. 7487.

Youth basketball

Youth basketball registration runs from Jan. 3 through 6. Cost is \$40 for members and \$45 for non-members. The AYP is also looking for coaches. For more information, call Ext. 7575.

Bowling bash

The Aviano Youth Program Bowl and Burrito Bash is from noon to 4 p.m. Jan. 7. The bash is open to 1st-6th graders, and participants must sign up by Jan. 4. Cost is \$8 for members and \$10 for non-members.

Aviano Grifoni

The Aviano Grifoni full contact Semi-pro American Football Team has openings for its 2006 season. For more information, contact Jerome Baysmore at 348-731-3388 or send an e-mail to deebobaysmo@yahoo.com.

Basketball

A three-on-three basketball tournament is at 9 a.m. Jan. 1. Teams can sign up at the Dragon Fitness Center. For more information, call Robby England at Ext. 7574.

Help wanted

The Aviano Dragon Fitness Center has openings for personal trainers and certified aerobic instructors. The staff is also looking for instructors wishing to pursue their certification. For more information, call Jennifer Kellner or Scott Bishaw at Ext. 7459.

Aviano's Hidden Heroes



Left: Audrey Sierra, Aviano spouse, volunteers on base as a teacher of the American Sign Language for about 20 students. Mrs. Sierra is a member of the deaf community who openly shares her language with the students in the sign language class. She serves as an inspiration because she balances her roles as the spouse of an active-duty firefighter, sign language instructor and the responsibilities of being the mother of a two-year-old and expecting a second child.

Right: Senior Airman Francisco Sierra, 31st Civil Engineer Squadron firefighter, is the volunteer principle instructor of the American Sign Language class on base. Airman Sierra balanced the academic requirements of Airman Leadership School with teaching the class despite only having a few spare moments between ALS and home. He took his teaching responsibility seriously enough to arrive on base to teach and return home to complete his ALS assignments. He's a volunteer teacher to serve others and routinely refuses offers for payment.



Recognizing The World's Finest

USAFE Award recipients

Tech. Sgt. Melissa L. Merritt - Outstanding Independent Duty Medical Technician NCO of the Year; **Health Promotions Flight** - Best Small Base Health Promotions Program; **Tech. Sgt. Derrick D. Bell** Brig. Gen. Sarah P. Wells Outstanding NCO Of The Year; **Capt. Troy P. Faaborg** - Company Grade Aerospace Physiologist of the Year; **Senior Airman Alexis M. Alexander** - Col. Donald D. Dunton Ophthalmic Airmen of the Year; **31st Medical Group Systems Flight** - Surgeon General's Medical Information Systems Team of the Year; **Ms. Erica Brescacin** - Surgeon General's Medical Information Sys Civilian of The Year; **Manuela Solda** - Outstanding Facility Manager of the Year; **Master Sgt. Edward D. Carthon** - Olson/Wegner Outstanding Aerospace Medicine Senior NCO of the Year; **Staff Sgt. Tamika W. Thomas** - Col. Donald D. Dunton Ophthalmic NCO of the Year; **Capt. Anthony P. Davis** - Public Health Officer of the Year; **Senior Airman Kristy L. Zentkovich** - Public Health Airmen of the Year; **Master Sgt. Robert L. Velez** - Aerospace Medicine Expeditionary Ops/Readiness Senior NCO of the Year; **Tech. Sgt. Sarah A. Benton** - Outstanding Enlisted Health Services Management NCO of the Year; **Capt. Beverly A. Clark** - Group Practice Manager of the Year; **Tech. Sgt. George A. Macias** - Chief Master Sgt. Harvey A. Cain Diet Therapy NCO of the Year; **Master Sgt. Vicki L. Rodriguez** - Senior NCO Pharmacy Technician of the Year.

Congratulations to the following Aviano Airmen who won the U.S. Air Forces in Europe X-Box tournament last Saturday. **Senior Airman Paul Mullins**, 31st Maintenance Squadron, **Staff Sgt. Andre Butler**, 31st Communications Squadron, **Airman 1st Class Dale Hoipkemier**, 31st CS, **David Hart**, Aviano Commissary.



Defender's challenge

Deployed Aviano Security Forces members remember their wingmen. Top row: Tech. Sgt. Kenneth Collier, 1st Lt. John Kim, Airman 1st Class Christopher Divine, Senior Airmen Timothy Davis and Felix Caballero, Airman 1st Class Joshua Deleon, Senior Airmen Brett Mattmiller, Brian Washington, and Airman 1st Class Eric Brewer. Bottom row: Staff Sgt. Rolando Martinez-Paez, Senior Airman Erin Qualters and Staff Sgt. Sergio Toro.



The Cornerstone

An indispensable and fundamental basis

The Cornerstone Page is devoted to those who support junior enlisted, NCOs, CGOs and spouses. It's to share advice, ideas and opinions dealing with life in the Air Force and Aviano. It's also a forum to recognize those around us. The Cornerstone Page will also offer Air Force trivia and facts.

Submission info: We want to hear from you. Flex your writing talents and share your thoughts with us and the community.

Commentaries: Writers can send commentaries to vigileer@aviano.af.mil. Commentaries must be 500 to 700 words. Topics must be applicable to the Air Force, Aviano and appeal to the general public. For questions or concerns, call the Vigileer at Ext. 7344.

Kudos: Aviano members can send congratulatory messages to Vigileer@aviano.af.mil. Messages can be submitted for appreciation, retirements, awards, good service, promotions and graduations. For questions or concerns, call the Vigileer at Ext. 7344.

Deadline: The deadline for submitting information is close of business Thursday one week prior to publication. Faxed articles will not be accepted by the staff. The public affairs office is in Bldg. 1360, Room 19.